

YEMEN COMMUNITIES STRONGER TOGETHER (YCST)

MONTHLY PROGRAM UPDATE – MAY 2020

OVERVIEW

During the reporting month, YCST focused on finalizing documentation required to implement service delivery projects and on obtaining and receiving approval from USAID for those projects. YCST received contract approval from USAID for one PACE and two Stabilization projects, in addition to selecting seven initiatives under the innovation sub-fund, completing the review of thirty-one proposals received in support of the Peacebuilding Grants Fund and Women, Peace and Security Sub-fund, and finalizing efforts towards completing the stabilization lesson learned report.

Despite public health challenges and the resumption of armed disputes, the YCST continued to forge ahead particularly in the areas of infrastructure projects and in developing plans for remote trainings and workshops. Since the first officially reported case was announced in early April, the coronavirus continued to spread throughout the country during the month of May. As a preventative measure, all YCST staff entered a work-from-home posture starting on May 4th. Finally, during the reporting month, the new Chief of Party was appointed and the recruitment for a new Deputy Chief of Party was initiated.

OBJECTIVE 1: ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECTS

FINALIZE DESIGN OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECTS FOR YEAR 1 COMMUNITIES

ADEN: Approval of the Al-Rabash Sanitary Drainage Network Project (RSDNP) was granted by USAID on May 15th. The first component of the RSDNP, located in the Dar Sa'ad district, is the rehabilitation of the existing drainage system, including (1) cleaning existing sanitation pipes, (2) rehabilitation of inspection rooms, and (3) installation of plates (manhole covers) for inspection rooms. The second component is to connect the unconnected portion of the sanitary drainage network to the main network and repair the main sewage pump station. The RSDNP will result in improved sanitary drainage for all residents of the Al-Rabash community. Cleaned sewage pipes and operating pumps will result in eliminating the backing up of sewage into buildings and streets.

At the request of the USAID environment officer, YCST PACE and engineering teams commenced an assessment of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to ensure that it is operational and that the additional quantities of wastewater, which will be generated as a result of YCST's intervention, can be handled by the WWTP without worsening the situation. YCST engineers coordinated with and continued to follow-up with the Local Water and Sanitation Corporation – Aden (LWSCA) to obtain required technical documentation and drawings to complete the assessment by the next reporting month.

In response to the USAID environment officer's request for a third party to design the RSDNP, YCST proposed that the Aden Local Water and Sanitation Corporation (LWSC) be allowed to design the RSDNP as the LWSC has the capacity and the experience to do so. The LWSC design will be reviewed by the YCST engineering team, and subsequently reviewed by YCST's senior WATSAN consultant who has over 18 years of professional experience in water and sanitation as well as work on similar projects. This two-step review would ensure that the design is both compliant to Yemeni standards and that it is, in fact, well-designed. Moreover, the YCST team has been trained on the design of wastewater collection/networks system by the WASH consultant during his visits to Yemen. YCST will seek environmental approval of the design approach as well as the rapid assessment upon its completion.

The solicitation process for the Dar Sa'ad Electricity Rehabilitation Project (DERP), which was approved by USAID on April 28th, was initiated in May. Tendering documents will be finalized and advertisement will take place in the next reporting month. The project will be implemented in the five communities of Al-Ulfi and Abd Albari (in eastern Dar Sa'ad) and Ali Jahis, Al-Loqaia and Ibn Al-Basir (in western Dar Sa'ad), in Aden governorate. The goal of the DERP is to rehabilitate and upgrade the power utility network for the five above-mentioned adjoining communities in the Dar Sa'ad district, which will be accomplished by replacing and installing transformers, service stations, switch gears, distribution boards, grid cabling, and low voltage cables.

LAHJ: During the reporting period, USAID's Agreement Officer approved the selected vendor for the Ras Al-Aarah Water Supply Enhancement Project (RWSEP) solar power system, under a subcontract valued at \$47,500. In the upcoming reporting period the YCST PACE team, alongside engineers, will prepare necessary documentation for subcontractor approval of the rehabilitation component of the RWSEP.

Based on the feedback provided by USAID in the previous reporting month, YCST engineers have amended project documentation for the Al-Suraih School Rehabilitation Project (SSRP), updating the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to align with the revised and approved Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP). The SSRP will rehabilitate four primary schools, namely 22 May (Shoqra), Al-Athaqah, Al-Egabah, Al-Sharj schools, located in the Al-Suraih Community of Al-Madaribah Wa Ras Al-Aarah district, in Lahj governorate. All target schools, which have combined enrollment of 368 students (197 boys and 171 girls), will benefit from better-quality conditions, creating a more pleasant environment conducive to improved learning, attendance and enrollment. The amended EIAs were submitted to USAID by the COP in mid-May.

In addition, the solicitation process for the Al-Nabyah Water Supply Enhancement Project (NWSEP), designed to improve rather than reconstruct the existing system, continued during this reporting month. Additional tender documents are under review by the Acting DCOP and are set to be advertised next month.

ABYAN: YCST previously submitted a proposal package to USAID for review and subsequent approval of the Al-Mahfad Water Supply Enhancement Project (MWSEP). Additional documentation was requested, all of which were delivered and submitted to USAID on April 30th. The goal of the MWSEP is to improve the water supply to the community by replacing existing older diesel-operated water pumps with two solar-powered submersible and energy-efficient water pumps. Other components include the rehabilitation of an existing stone reservoir, replacement of damaged pipes and provision of technical training and maintenance kit to enable the sustainable operation and maintenance of the system. Under separate technical assistance, YCST will help the water committee

build its management capacity and conduct a hygiene awareness campaign in the community. YCST's solicitation process will commence upon receipt of USAID technical approval of this project.

CONFLICT MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS/PARTNERS FOR GOOD

During the reporting month of May, the PACE team worked closely with YCST subawardee, Partners for Good, to 1) provide a virtual training workshop for the PACE team in June 2020 and 2) develop and finalize the PACE Manual and separate Documentation Guideline. The virtual training aims at using interactive online training platforms i.e. Facebook, Microsoft Teams or Edraak to provide technical training to thirty PACE participants amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, with certificates being provided following remote participation and training assessments. The PACE Manual was revised to include the process and steps of the PACE methodology within the Yemeni context, while the Documentation Guideline provides requirements of the archiving system.

YEAR I COMMUNITIES COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES

All communal activities and events continue to be temporarily suspended since March 2020 following directives from the Ministry on Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC). The YCST team has informed all stakeholders of this suspension, and will resume activities as soon as it is safe to do so.

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD THE CAPACITY OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LOCAL LEADERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND NETWORKS TO SERVE AS NEUTRAL ARBITRATORS AND PEACE BUILDERS AND MEET COMMUNITY AND CONSTITUENT NEEDS

INNOVATION GRANTS SUB-FUND

Build Up, alongside the YCST grants team, notified the final seven innovation sub-fund teams of their official acceptance based on the selection criteria and final evaluation results. Each team has met the criteria established to receive an award in that they have: (1) demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the community context and dynamics, and the ability to link to ongoing processes and local actors; (2) presented a creative or innovative approach for solving a community problem; (3) has the potential to increase the reach and impact of peacebuilding or social cohesion efforts; and (4) the initiative is viable to achieve meaningful milestones within the program timeframe.

The teams were notified on the status of their re-submissions and of the way forward. Moreover, Build Up developed a Briefing Note, which was subsequently submitted by the COP and approved by the AOR on May 14th, to provide team members in the upcoming months with technical support and strategic project advice. The Note contains overall guidance on the requirements for each of the teams, including participation in trainings, methodologies and research tools, as well as some remote mentorship via online platforms such as WhatsApp. Team members will use this platform to communicate, coordinate and develop workplans and budgets, given internet connectivity issues in the innovation grant target communities.

YCST will submit requests for technical approval to USAID for all seven proposed innovation sub-fund grant ideas during the next reporting period. Following approval from USAID, Build Up and YCST's grants team will work with the seven innovation sub-fund teams to develop workplans and budgets in support of each initiative. Once finalized, requests for subaward approval will be submitted to USAID; awards will be issued upon Agreement Officer approval.

PEACEBUILDING AND WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY GRANTS

In May, the grants department facilitated a review session with the evaluation committee members (consisting of members from the YCST PACE, Stabilization, and MEAL teams) to discuss the first, second and third round Full Grant Applications (FGAs) received under the Annual Program Statement for Peacebuilding and Women, Peace and Security Sub-fund, as well as their evaluative scores. Of the 31 FGAs scored in these three rounds, evaluators agreed that 20 of them would proceed to the Pre-award Assessment for Financial Responsibility (PAFR) phase. The PAFR phase involves the process in determining if potential subawardees have the financial capacity to manage a grant, as well as the level of risk which will aid in determining the type of grant award (Standard, Fixed Amount Award, or In-Kind). Following is the analysis of the all three rounds:

Round 1	14 of 21 applications will proceed to the PAFR phase
Round 2:	6 of 7 applications will proceed to the PAFR phase
Round 3:	0 applications will proceed

Progress was also made during the reporting month on the fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds of the APS. May 21st was the deadline for receiving FGAs from seven NGOs/CBOs under the fourth round. An additional nine NGOs/CBOs submitted their FGAs by May 27th under the fifth round. Evaluations of all twenty-five concept papers received under round six were finalized and completed on May 21st. The evaluating committee will commence the review and scoring process for the fourth, fifth, and six rounds in June.

YCST's grants team continued to coordinate with the finance department for all successful FGAs on a variety of items including: preparing Pre-award Assessments for Financial Responsibility (PAFR); conducting System for Award Management (SAM) Exclusion List, U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List, and the United Nations Consolidated Sanctions List (UNSL) screenings to ensure that applicants do not appear on the SAM, OFAC SDN and UNSL; drafting Grant Summary Memorandums (GSM) for each APS round; and lastly developing financial reporting guidelines for awardees. These guidelines will serve to confirm each awardee's fiduciary responsibility vis-à-vis donors and to ensure that each subawardee is held accountable for the amount of funds being spent. The guidelines will also lay the ground for financial report submission, and a streamlined liquidation process, and will be reviewed by the YCST Chief of Party (COP) and Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) before finalization.

OBJECTIVE 3: PILOT STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE MODELS TO CREATE WHERE CREDIBLE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SYSTEMS CAN PEACEABLY MANAGE CONFLICTS AND PREVENT A RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE

FINALIZATION OF PROJECT DESIGN PROVIDED TO USAID

TAIZ: The Stabilization team, in conjunction with engineering staff, continued to develop technical documentation in preparation for submission to USAID for technical approval of the Al-Azaez School Rehabilitation Project (ASRP). All required proposal documents were submitted to the former YCST Senior Technical Specialist prior to his resignation at the end of the reporting period. The COP aims to finalize the proposal package for submission to USAID for technical approval next month.

MONITOR PROJECT PROGRESS

ABYAN: Throughout this reporting period, the stabilization team alongside engineers conducted weekly follow-up field visits to the Khadija School Rehabilitation Project – Joint New Classroom Component in partnership with CARE International. The objectives of field visits were to track progress and remain in close engagement with local authority leaders with regards to the status of the projects, specifically with the District Managers of the district of Zinjibar. The stabilization team and District Managers of Zinjibar and Ju'ar laised on the status of the current pending projects and the possible effects to implementation due to on-going armed disputes in Abyan and the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

On May 15th, USAID approved two subcontracts: one for the implementation of the second component of the Khadija School Rehabilitation Project (KGS) – Shade & Bathrooms project and the other for the Ja'ar Park (Green Zone) Rehabilitation Project. The total value of each approved subcontracts is \$30,340 and \$59,500 respectively. Solicitation for the solar lighting component of the Ja'ar Park project will be conducted separately.

TAIZ: The stabilization team continued to follow-up and update field project managers of the status of the projects at the Al Mansoorah Health Center Rehabilitation Project (MHCRP) and Al Ma'afer Rural Hospital Sanitation System Rehabilitation Project (MRHSRP). YCST has engaged with the District Managers of Al-Ma'afer to update them on the current status of the project and future plants amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

During the reporting month, the stabilization team assisted in the preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Al Ma'afer Rural Hospital Sanitation System Rehabilitation Project (MRHSRP) and finalized the MOU for the Al Mansoorah Health Center Rehabilitation Project (MHCRP).

OBJECTIVE 4: CARRY OUT REGULAR AND ACTION-ORIENTED LEARNING AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS ACROSS YCST INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR ENHANCED OUTCOMES

FINALIZATION OF THE STABILIZATION LESSONS LEARNED REPORT # 2

In May, YCST finalized the second stabilization lessons report to be submitted to USAID in June 2020. The report tests stabilization approaches that could be scaled up as conditions for peace and transition in Yemen evolve. It provides insights on how YCST's targeted communities perceive changes that have taken place as result of the stabilization interventions in Abyan and Taiz governorates. Changes in opinion, trust and confidence, and the relationship with district authorities and the Republic of Yemen Government (RoYG) was documented in the report. YCST is also planning to conduct an After Action Review (AAR) in June to reflect on the lessons learned from the process and how future similar exercises can be improved.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Proposal packages for service delivery projects will continue to be developed for submission to USAID for approval throughout the next reporting period, in preparation for solicitation processes. Bid documents and announcement for the tender of the Dar Sa'ad Electricity Rehabilitation Project (DERP) will take place in the next reporting period.

YCST will seek technical approval for the Al Sureeh Health Center Rehabilitation Project (SHCRP) aimed to rehabilitate three existing examination rooms and sanitation facilities, construct two

additional examination rooms, a portal shade and perimeter fencing, and install a 1,000-liter capacity water tank, solar power system, and a medical incinerator. A separate request for the Jayshan Water Supply Enhancement Project (JWSEP) will be submitted to USAID for in June. The project aims to replace the diesel-operated water pump with a solar-powered submersible and energy efficient water pump, install a solar energy system, rehabilitate the stone reservoir, and replace damaged main pipeline of the water distribution network that feeds the reservoir. YCST also aims to seek technical approval on the Hayder Football Field Rehabilitation Project (HFFRP) to install fencing to separate the playing field from the grand stand, as well as supplying field accessories such as a corner flag, refurbish goal posts, and small goal posts for the younger players.

The finance team will conduct the Pre-award Assessment for Financial Responsibility (PAFR) for 20 of 31 Full Grant Applications received in response to the first, second and third rounds of the Annual Program Statement for Peacebuilding and Women, Peace and Security grants. Innovation Sub-fund grant proposals will be submitted to USAID for technical approval.

Lastly, the next reporting month will see the selection and onboarding of the new Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP).

MANAGEMENT UPDATES

STAFFING

Whitney Sims assumed the Chief of Party role on May 3rd and continued to serve as Acting Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) during the reporting period.

YCST's Senior Technical Specialist, Greg Olson, contracted to prepare service delivery proposal packages for submission to USAID for review and approval, tendered his resignation prior to the end of his contract with Global Communities. The YCST Chief of Party and the MEL Director will jointly complete the tasks and responsibilities assigned to Mr. Olson until such time as the Deputy Chief is in place.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

COVID-19 continued to be a challenge during this reporting month. While case numbers are remain relatively low in the country, Yemen is now in full-blown transmission. Taking this into consideration, YCST moved to work from home posture for all staff, effective May 4th. Office hours were made available for critical functions, primarily involving finance, and for very limited time periods, with the explicit approval of the Chief of Party.